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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a school-home reading project that was developed to support culturally and linguistically diverse beginning readers, and offers practical suggestions for starting such a program. First-grade classrooms from 5 Chapter 1 schools in a large suburban school district are participating in the project. Teachers in these classrooms send books and audiotapes home on a daily basis to supplement the classroom reading instructional program. The audiotaped books provide an opportunity for students to hear English storybooks in their home environment, using familiar literacy instructional materials from school. Practical suggestions addressed in the paper include selecting books, preparing audiotapes, acquiring tape recorders, organizing home-school materials, introducing home-school procedures to children, and assessing the effectiveness of the home-school reading program. To accommodate a range of interests and reading difficulty levels, over 150 books with commonly used English language patterns were selected for use. The books range in length from 14 words to complex narrative stories. To develop daily home reading routines, the project provided access to literacy materials (books, audiotapes, tape recorders), training in procedures for their use, and regular communication with parents about the reading activity. Parents and teachers who participated in the project have observed a definite increase in children's fluency and reading independence, as well as increased student interest in books. (Contains 25 references. An appendix lists selected books used in the project, along with the publisher, level, and number of words for each book.) (Author/RS)

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Have You Heard Any Good Books Lately?

Encouraging Shared Reading at Home with Books and Audiotapes

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Instructional Resource No. 15
Summer 1995

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About the National Reading Research Center

The National Reading Research Center (NRRC) is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education to conduct research on reading and reading instruction. The NRRC is operated by a consortium of the University of Georgia and the University of Maryland College Park in collaboration with researchers at several institutions nationwide.

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Universities of Georgia and Maryland
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Abstract. *This article describes a school-home reading project that was developed to support culturally and linguistically diverse beginning readers. First-grade classrooms from five Chapter 1 schools in a large suburban school district are currently participating in this project. Teachers in these classrooms send books and audiotapes home on a daily basis to supplement the classroom reading instructional program. The audiotaped books provide an opportunity for students to hear English storybooks in their home environment by using familiar literacy instructional materials from school. To accommodate a range of interests and reading difficulty levels, over 150 books with commonly used English language patterns were selected for use in this project. These books range in length from 14 words to complex narrative stories. To provide models of fluent reading in English, the program includes teachers' shared reading of the project books in the classroom and audiotapes of the stories for use in students' homes. In order to develop daily home reading routines, the project provides access to literacy materials (e.g., books, audiotapes, tape recorders), training in procedures for their use, and regular communication with parents about the reading activity. Parents and teachers who participated in the project have observed a definite increase in children's fluency and reading independence, as well as increased student interest in books.*

"You always take that book! I want it tonight!" Anna snatched the book bag and then carefully put the card from *Don't Wake the Baby* on the "Dog Gone Good Reading" chart. After checking to see that she had the audiotape, she put the book into her backpack. Raza knew Anna was right. He had checked it out a lot and had told us how much he loved all the sounds in the baby book, especially the crying at the end! Now, he had to find something else to take home today and watched as Juan pulled out *The Scrumptious Sundae* from one of the home-school book baskets. When Ms. Barker had read it last week, everyone was talking about their favorite ice

> cream. He had said that he loved the candy sprinkles on the top. "That's a good one," he said to Juan. "Yeah, I know—but I'm looking for *The Big Toe*. My sister thought it was scary." After Juan moved to another basket of books, Raza happily dropped the ice cream book into his own backpack. Anna, who had been standing near the door, called to him in her best "teacher" voice, "Raza, you forgot to put the card on the chart."

The second-language learners and native English-speaking children in this first-grade classroom have been learning to read and write in a literacy program that includes the use of books and audiotapes. In developing this program, Anna's, Raza's, and Juan's teacher, Ms. Barker, was responding to her concerns about "at risk" second-language learners. Anna, from Vietnam, lives with her brother and her parents who come home from their store every night after nine. Juan's family came from El Salvador a year ago. His mother works in a beauty shop all day and at a fast food restaurant at night. Raza's mom meets him at the bus every day, and when they get home, she reads to him from the *Koran*. All of these children have family members who care about them. From parent conferences, however, Ms. Barker learned that English is not spoken in these homes, and the children have only a few storybooks in English or their home language.

Ms. Barker has been sending books and audiotapes home on a daily basis to supplement the classroom reading instructional program. All the children in her class have had the opportunity to take the books and tapes home, but the 9 children who speak English as a second language were the initial focus of her home-school shared reading program. The "Dog Gone Good Reading" program provided these students with an opportunity to hear English spoken in their home environment on a daily basis using familiar books from school.

Home-School Literacy Programs for ESL Students

During the last decade, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students who speak English as a second language in United States schools. Recent estimates suggest that there are more than 2.2 million children currently enrolled in our schools who have limited proficiency in English and that these numbers will increase by the year 2000 to over 3.4 million (*The Condition of Bilingual Education in the Nation*, 1991). Many of these children are recent immigrants who lack communication skills in their new language.

Because second-language learners are in many classrooms across the nation, there is now considerable emphasis on designing learning environments which support these culturally and linguistically diverse students. There is a need to provide many opportunities for these children to develop and practice language and reading skills, particularly within the classroom context that includes native English-speaking peers. As teachers face the challenge of teaching both native English speakers and second-language learners in the same classroom, special emphasis needs to be given to instructional activities that are appropriate and effective for both of these populations.

There is also a need to expand the language and literacy experiences of young readers and to find ways to support classroom

instruction in other contexts, such as the home. This is particularly important since children's experiences with language and reading at home are thought to influence substantially their success or failure in learning to read. Second-language learners typically are exposed to 40,000 hours of their home language after six years of schooling and only 3,000 hours of English (Elley & Mangubhai, 1983). These children seldom have books available to them in their homes. We know, however, that access to books is one critical factor in early literacy development (Elley, 1992). Children who have few experiences with reading and books outside of school are at a distinct disadvantage.

Helping students develop expertise in reading has been an important component in our efforts to design learning environments that foster literacy. In such an environment, students understand what they read, learn strategies to improve their reading, feel successful, and are motivated to practice (Meichenbaum & Biemiller, 1990). We have been especially interested in repeated reading as an instructional strategy to develop fluency (i.e., smooth, accurate, natural, expressive reading) with both less proficient and developmental readers. This deceptively simple rehearsal strategy involves multiple readings and provides substantial practice in reading text. It allows novices to feel like experts as they acquire fluency (Blum & Koskinen, 1991). Research with English-speaking students has documented that repeated reading improves reading rate and accuracy (Chomsky, 1976; Dahl, 1974; Dowhower, 1987; Rasinski, 1990; Samuels, 1979), increases vocabulary (Elley, 1989; Koskinen & Blum, 1984), and enhances comprehension (Dowhower, 1987; Yaden, 1988). In addition, there are indications that repeated reading helps students feel more confident about their reading and is an activity in which they want to participate (Koskinen & Blum, 1986; Topping, 1987).

Repeated reading appears to provide opportunities for learners to develop expertise as well as considerable motivation to practice. While it has been used extensively with English-speaking students, only recently has research indicated that repeated reading with the support of audiotaped books also has particular benefits for second-language learners (Blum et al., in press). In this study by Blum et al., repeated reading of books at home was compared to home reading that included books and accompanying audiotapes. When given the opportunity to practice reading books with audiotapes at home, students who spoke English as a second language showed substantial growth in their ability to read books of increasing difficulty fluently and accurately. In addition, teachers and parents reported that students read more and demonstrated increased confidence and independence in literacy activities.

It appears that support provided by an audio model extends language learning by providing a form of scaffolding, or supported practice, which is critical for beginning readers (Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqui, & Share, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978). Hearing the text while reading it encourages beginning readers to make connections between the more familiar oral language and the less familiar written language. Children, therefore, begin to recognize vocabulary that was previously unknown. Programs that also include daily access to books are necessary to enhance reading

achievement (Elley, 1992). In addition, it provided for several other factors shown by research to increase students' motivation to read (Gambrell et al., 1995). These factors include choice of materials (Spaulding, 1992) and opportunities for social interactions about books (Guthrie, Schafer, Wang, & Afflerbach, 1993).

Planning an Effective Program

How do you extend school reading experiences into the homes of children where English is not often spoken and where there are few children's books written in English? How do you help children who speak English but have no one to read to them at home? These are daily challenges for an increasingly large number of teachers as they attempt to design learning environments that will foster literacy skills. They also have been our particular challenges as we have worked with linguistically and culturally diverse students within the regular classroom. As we collaborated with teachers, such as Ms. Barker, to develop a home-school reading program, we identified a few especially important issues. First, there is a need to provide for a range of interests and reading difficulty levels so that students will have successful initial experiences with storybook reading. Short books with repetitive language patterns, which have been used successfully in first-grade classrooms, are especially appropriate for home-school reading. Second, there is a need to provide models of fluent reading in English. Since many parents have limited skill in reading written English, they are not able to assist with or monitor students' reading. Teachers' shared readings of books that are used for home reading are a particularly valuable way to provide a model. This shared reading provides not only an auditory model, but also background vocabulary knowledge and generally excites interest by the teacher's attention to the book. Audiotapes of the stories for use at home can provide another model and support for oral reading. Third, since the children are not accustomed to daily home reading, consideration needs to be given to encouraging this activity. Developing daily home reading routines, providing access to literacy materials (e.g., books, audiotapes, tape recorders), and packaging these materials are particularly important.

Ms. Barker's Home-School Program

Ms. Barker's first-grade class of 15 students had 9 second-language learners and several native English-speaking children, many of whom had few storybooks in their homes. She and the ESL resource teacher were particularly eager to provide activities that would support and extend reading opportunities in the children's homes. During the summer, they had worked with the authors, other teachers, and volunteers to make read-along audiotapes for more than 150 multilevel books that were used in many first-grade reading programs. These books ranged in length from 14 words to complex narrative stories. In addition, through a school literacy program, she procured tape recorders and backpacks for each child to use. As a way of getting started, Ms. Barker brought in the books, tape recorders, tapes, and backpacks that the children would be using for home-school reading. She told the children that they would have an opportunity to take home a book and tape every day and even be

able to keep the tape recorder at their home for several months so they could do this special reading homework.

Ms. Barker wanted to acquaint students with the books before sending them home, so she began daily readings of these books. This shared reading of a book took less than 5 min daily and provided a way for her to create excitement about the books. Her shared reading included: (1) an oral look-through, with the children making predictions and the teacher providing key vocabulary and examples of frequently used language patterns; (2) an oral reading of the book by the teacher; and (3) a rereading of the book with the children. After reading each book, she put it into a community basket so everyone had access to it for independent reading times throughout the day.

While Ms. Barker was introducing these home-school books on a daily basis, she also sent a letter to the parents telling them about the home reading activities that would be starting. Although she had discussed the home-school reading program with the parents who attended "back-to-school night," she sent a letter to each family. To insure that parents could read the letter, she had it translated into the languages the families spoke: Farsi, Spanish, Vietnamese, Laotian, and Korean. Her letter provided information about the importance of practice in becoming a skilled reader and introduced a few details about the home reading activity. Most importantly, it enlisted their support and interest (see Figure 1).

After about 3 weeks, when she had read at least 15 books to the children, she introduced a book check-out procedure and began to encourage school use of the tapes and tape recorders. After explaining why it was important to keep track of the books and tapes, she demonstrated how to use the chart and card check-out system she had developed. She also modeled how to follow along with the tape and the mechanics of using the tape recorder. Ms. Barker then provided time each day for one child to model selecting a book and tape set, checking it out, completing the read-along activity, and then checking it in. Although it took several weeks to give each child a chance, at the end of this practice time, both Ms. Barker and the children were very comfortable with the procedures and able to handle them independently. Everyone was ready to "teach their parents" how to start the tape by pressing the button with a green dot, read along with the story, stop the tape by pressing the button marked with a red dot, and then rewind the tape so that they could begin again. In addition to developing the children's proficiency with the book and tape procedures, Ms. Barker also helped the students plan where and when they would do their daily home reading.

Since Ms. Barker had many beginning readers, she decided to stagger her startup, only permitting 5 children to begin taking home books and tapes at one time. After the first group became comfortable with this procedure, 5 more children began. The more "experienced" children were able to give advice related to where the tape recorder could be stored at home and how to remember to bring the book and tape back each day. One child's advice was, "I put them in my backpack as soon as I finish. Then I don't have to worry about them in the morning."

Ms. Barker continued to introduce a new book each day so there would always be many books from which the children could choose.

Dear Parents,

We know that the more children read, the better they will do in school! I want to let you know about some special reading homework your child will be doing this year. Everyday, your child will choose a book and tape to bring home for extra reading practice.

I will be sending home a tape recorder to use with the tapes. You can keep the tape recorder at your house for the next few months. Please help your child find a place to practice with the books and tapes and a safe place to keep the tape recorder.

This extra practice everyday will help your child be a more successful student. We will be contacting you to talk about what we are doing in our class and how you can help with this special project.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Sincerely,

_____
Teacher

_____
Principal

DOG GONE GOOD READING PROJECT

Figure 1. Letter to parents about the Home-School Reading Program

Since children were excited about the books they had read at home, Ms. Barker established at least one time during the week when students could read their home-school books to a partner. During this time, Ms. Barker listened to several children and made anecdotal notes as she moved among the partner teams. Her notes were helpful in guiding students to appropriate books for the home-school reading and were another valuable source of ongoing assessment information. About once a month, Ms. Barker sent home a reminder notice on brightly colored paper to both parents and students. She also had this note translated for the convenience of parents who did not read English.

Soon after children began bringing books and tapes home on a regular basis, Ms. Barker and the parents noticed an increase in their daily reading and conversations about books. Many children wanted to take extra books home for the weekend or on vacation. One parent mentioned that after practicing with the tape, her daughter continued reading to her younger sister when they were in the bathtub. Another mother described how her daughter regularly got up early so she could read to her father at breakfast. Children commented that they liked to read along with the tapes. One child noted, "The books didn't say what the word was the way the tapes did." Another child describing how the tapes helped her, told Ms. Barker, "I could hear the story. I put on the tape recorder. I know the words and finish the book." Along with increased student interest in books, Ms. Barker and the parents observed a definite increase in children's fluency and reading independence. Furthermore, they noticed children beginning to monitor their reading. As a child exclaimed one morning after taking home only a book, "Ms. Barker, that book was hard. I needed the tape!"

Practical Suggestions for Getting Started

Ms. Barker is one of many teachers who have been using books and audiotapes to enhance literacy opportunities at home. The key to a successful program involves careful planning, appropriate materials, and teacher guidance at all phases. The enthusiasm of the children and their parents appears to make the extra teacher time worth the effort. The following are suggestions that teachers of young readers have found helpful when coordinating a home-school literacy program which involves books and tapes.

Selecting Books

When deciding which books to select for your program, consider using short books with repetitive language patterns which will appeal to a range of interests and ability levels. The shared and repeated reading in our home-school reading projects has been conducted with books that are written in English (see Appendix). These short books contain familiar concepts and vocabulary with commonly used oral language patterns. In addition, they have illustrations which portray closely the meaning and language of the story. The gradually increasing level of language difficulty, ranging from single word labels and two-word sentences to complex text with literary language, provide an opportunity for emerging readers to have successful experiences with print. Consequently, these books are particularly appropriate for second-language learners as well as beginning readers who are native speakers of

English. When possible, order paperback books which are more economical and therefore enable you to purchase a greater number. Children enjoy having a variety of books to read.

Preparing Audiotapes

Since audiotapes provide scaffolding for learning to read, it is important to provide a clear, fluent model. We found that the reading needs to be smooth and expressive, but slow enough so students can match oral and written words. As we made our tapes, we used the following procedures. The reader first stated the book's title along with the name of the author and illustrator. Students were then directed to the story and encouraged by the reader to "put your finger under the first word and follow along as I read." The book's text was then read at a pace which would allow beginning readers to follow along. Children were signaled to turn the page with a sound cue. (We used many different sounds, such as a soft whistle, bell, spoon on a glass, and so forth.) Students were also given at least 3 sec to turn the page after they heard the page-turning sound. This amount of time allowed the young readers to look at the pictures and physically turn the page. In some of our programs, the story was read twice on the tape. The first reading was expressive but slow enough for speech-to-print matching. The second reading was at a faster pace, more typical of fluent oral reading. After making the tape, we first listened to it and then labeled it with the book's title. As a safety precaution, we removed the tabs on the tapes so children would not accidentally erase the story.

Teachers have successfully involved many people in the making of audiotapes, including parents, older children, school staff, and community volunteers. Teachers have also done some of the taping themselves by reserving specific times before or after school for taping. Some teachers have used shared reading time in class to record tapes. If you do this, be sure to have the tape recorder prepared so that it can be turned on while you read a book to the class. Ms. Barker taped the books she used in her home-school shared reading program during the summer, with the help of the ESL resource teacher and several other volunteers. She was careful to check each completed tape for accuracy and clarity.

Acquiring Tape Recorders

To ensure that all of your students can listen to tapes at home, you probably will need to provide tape recorders for almost all of your class. While some families have a tape recorder, we found that often it is broken or not available for use by a young child. When children in our home-school reading programs were given both books and audiotapes for home reading, they were also given a tape recorder for their personal use during the project. We purposely did not use earphones that sometimes came with the machines, thereby encouraging others in the family to listen along with the reader. Reasonably priced, battery-operated tape recorders with easy-to-use controls are commercially available for less than $25. Although small tape recorders are less expensive, we found they are also more appealing to older children and then "lost." Therefore, we used tape recorders that were at

least 12" in length. These were more durable and less appealing to older children who might want to borrow them. You also might want to mark each tape recorder with a number and a school name or project logo. Also, if the controls on your machines are all the same color, consider marking the tape recorder controls with colored dots to help children recognize the words "start" (green), "stop" (red) and "rewind" (blue). Such markings also make the recorder easily recognizable to all family members as the student's special machine for reading homework.

Teachers have appealed to a range of groups to get support for literacy materials such as books and tape recorders. Parent-teacher groups, professional educational organizations, local merchants, and fast-food chains who offer educational grants have all helped to underwrite these expenses.

Organizing Home-School Materials

In order to implement a home-school shared reading program, you will need a substantial number of books. Organizing these materials is essential so that you can keep track of them. In our program, we used approximately 150 different books that ranged from emergent to independent first-grade level. There were two copies of each title. These were color coded to assist with organization and management of project materials and activities. One copy, marked with a red dot, was used for in-class reading after it had been introduced; another copy, marked with a yellow dot, was packaged along with an audiotape of the story for home use. The "packages" were plastic bags that secured at the top and had the book's title written on colored tape on the front. Yellow-dot books were supplied with a library card so that they could be checked out and in as they were transported back and forth from home to school.

Procedures for the daily book exchange need to be designed so that students can work independently. To assist with management of the daily book exchange, teachers in our projects used a poster board chart. This chart, with the project logo (dog mascot) and title "Dog Gone Good Reading," contained library card-pockets with each child's name. The children were taught to remove the library cards from the backs of their books and place them in their pockets on the chart when they checked out a book and tape. When they checked materials in, they retrieved the cards from their chart pockets and replaced the cards back in the books.

As you design your home-school reading program, consider providing a motivating and convenient way for children to transport materials. We have found that providing some sort of "bag" not only facilitated the return of materials from home, but also helped children remember to read on a daily basis. Teachers have used plastic suitcases, "recycled" briefcases, or lunch boxes for this purpose. Teachers in our projects used inexpensive backpacks, marked with the project title "Dog Gone Good Reading" and designated expressly for the purpose of carrying reading materials to and from school.

Providing Shared Reading Opportunities

Shared reading provides an effective and convenient way to build a pool of familiar books

GUIDELINES FOR INTRODUCING
THE "DOG GONE GOOD" PROJECT BOOKS

Time: Approximately 5 minutes

Oral Look-through

1. Show children the book and look at cover illustration together.
   Read title of book, pointing to words as you read them.

   For example, My Home.

   Ask children what they think the book might be about. (Accept a few responses.)
   Tell them you will be looking at the pictures to find out what the story is about.

2. Page through the book, looking at the pictures together. Point to a concrete object and then to the word naming it. As you go through the book, tell the story, providing *key vocabulary* and *examples of language patterns* that children will need to read the book independently.

   For example, "In this story, different animals tell us where their homes are. The bird said, *My home is here. The frog said, My home is here. The pig said, My home is here. Then the dog showed where her home is. Now the dog sees a rabbit. The rabbit wants to get to her home* fast. *The dog wants the rabbit to* come back."

Reading

3. After looking through the book, read it to the children. Continue matching objects and words.

Rereading

4. Read the book a second time, inviting the children to read along.
   Point to the words as you read.

5. Place the book in the "DOG GONE GOOD READING" basket so that it will be available for students to read at school.

Figure 2. One teacher's guidelines for shared reading

so that children can make appropriate selections for their home reading. Since this activity is often part of first-grade instruction, it easily fits into the daily schedule. Many teachers have a favorite procedure for shared reading, but the activity generally involves the teacher introducing the book and then rereading with the students several times. One teacher's guidelines for shared reading are presented in Figure 2. Some teachers prefer to designate a particular time for sharing the home-school books; others find the activity fits in best during transition times. So that all the children in the class can be successful, especially as you begin your program, many teachers have found it helpful to start off with a substantial number of the easiest books. Once you are off to a good start, continue introducing at least one book a day so that interesting choices at varying difficulty levels are available to the children. As books are introduced, they can be displayed and made available for use during independent reading times in the classroom. Colorful baskets or other containers which are readily available can be used for book displays. Several teachers in our projects commented that during independent reading time, many children were especially eager to reread the book that had been shared that day. Frequently, children asked if they could read the book to peers or to the teacher.

Introducing the Home-School Procedures to Children

The success of your home reading program is based in part on how comfortable your young readers are with the program's materials and procedures. In addition to knowing why reading at home is so important, children will need to understand how to: (1) select a book; (2) check a book in and out for home use; (3) operate the tape recorder; and (4) read along with the story three times.

When discussing our home-school reading programs with children, we very simply told our beginning readers that they would be reading books in school and then choosing books to take home and read along with a tape so they could become "really good" readers. The children have generally been delighted when they realize that the colorful backpacks, books, and tape recorders are for them to take home. Since all books are shared with the children in class, they become somewhat familiar with them. This procedure helps them select books that are both of interest and also at an appropriate difficulty level. Teacher modeling and subsequent practice of the check-in/check-out procedures and use of the tape recorder are essential so that children will be able to engage in the activity independently.

Some teachers spent a considerable amount of time discussing, modeling, and practicing home reading activities. Children practiced how to follow along with the tape recorder, including following the tape's directions for finding the starting place in the book, turning pages at the signal, and pointing to the words while reading. After reading along with the tape, children then practiced rewinding the tape and reading along with the tape a second and a third time. Some teachers held discussions related to where to do reading at home and where a safe place would be in the children's homes to store the tape recorder. As an extension activity, some children drew a picture of this place in their apartment or house,

took it home, and had their parents sign an agreement related to the storage place.

Introducing the Home-School Program to Parents

As you are introducing the children to the home-school reading material, you also will want to explain your home reading program to their parents or caregivers. A letter that some teachers have sent home (such as the one in Figure 1) briefly provides background information about the program. Since many of the parents cannot read English, teachers have located interpreters for the different languages spoken by their students' families. If there is a concern that a parent cannot read, then teachers have held meetings with parents where an interpreter was present or they have explained the program to an interpreter and asked him/her to call the parents. When possible, teachers have introduced the program at "back-to-school night" or during a regular parent-teacher conference. Teachers have stressed the importance of reading at home and of listening to and reading with students. Some teachers have also explained how repeated reading provides a lot of exposure to words and concepts as well as how children learn from looking at picture books while listening to the tape recorder. Teachers have found that when they explain the classroom routines (book selection and return) and the expectations for home reading (repeated listening and reading on a daily basis), parents begin to support their children in their daily reading. Many parents who previously had not been encouraging daily reading have become part of the "home reading team" by being a listener and by helping the child assume responsibility for finding a place for home reading and remembering to bring the book back to school each morning.

Beginning Home Reading With Audiotapes

When you feel your children understand the home reading procedures, consider having just a small group begin to take materials home. We have started with 4 to 6 children. Select a time for regular daily check-out/check-in. Some teachers have preferred that children return their books when they come in the morning and then choose a new book and tape during the reading/writing period. Since we have been working with young readers, we have had the children put the book/tape package and the tape recorder in their backpacks to take home as soon as they have selected their book. Be sure to remind the children that the tape recorder is to *stay at home*, but that book/tape packages are returned each day so that they can choose a new one.

The initial group can model for the class for two or three days. After that, you can add a second group and then subsequent groups. We found that the more "experienced" users of books and tapes can be very helpful with the new groups, providing assistance in book selection and check-in/check-out procedures.

Once children have begun taking books home, you will want to continue introducing one book each day. Keep these books in a special area so children can find and reread them during classroom reading times. Since you will eventually have many books from which the children can choose for home reading, you will also want to keep the books and tapes in some order so students can find books

they want. We grouped books in baskets according to difficulty level so that students could easily locate books at their appropriate level.

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Home-School Reading Program

The home-school reading program has been suggested as an enjoyable and motivating way to provide materials and opportunities to practice reading at home on a regular basis with the hope that this practice will improve students' reading. You will want to think about ways of maintaining the smooth and regular operation of the program. You will also want to think about how to assess the program's impact on students' reading.

To help monitor whether children are using the procedures and routines to make appropriate book selections, you may want to set aside a few minutes each week to observe different groups selecting books during check in and check out. If children are selecting the same book day after day or often choosing books that are too easy or too difficult, you occasionally may want to suggest that they take additional books that are more appropriate choices.

You should anticipate that occasionally children will forget to return their books, and you will probably want to plan a consistent policy. Many teachers permit a child who forgets to return a book/tape package to take a second one and return both the next day. However, you will need to limit the number of "no shows" to keep an adequate supply for the class. If students frequently forget to return the materials, you will need to contact the parents and remind them of the importance of consistently practicing at home and returning materials on time.

To help maintain interest and enthusiasm for the book and tape activity, you may also find it helpful to send periodic reminders to parents and students. Some teachers included a reminder about home-school reading in the weekly newsletter that was sent to each family. Others sent individual notes or flyers. Figure 3 shows one teacher's reminder note in both English and Spanish. You may also want to use a few minutes during parent conferences to discuss the home-school reading project. Be sure to ask parents about their child's progress at home and their response to the program.

To evaluate the program's impact on reading performance, teachers have used a variety of observational and interview activities. One teacher developed an activity that provides ongoing assessment information and fits easily into classroom instructional routines. At least once a week, her students worked with a partner and shared one of the books they had read at home. The teacher circulated during paired reading and noted the children's familiarity and fluency with the book they were sharing. This information was useful in guiding children's book selections and also provided valuable data on the students' progress.

Concluding Comments

The second-language learners and English-speaking children in our projects who had the opportunity to practice reading books with audiotapes at home received substantial benefit from the home-school reading program. It appears that the support provided by the audiotapes enabled students to fluently read increasingly more

DOG GONE GOOD READING PROGRAM

REMINDER!

Remember to

read your book

2 or 3 times

every day!

You can read to yourself or to someone in your family.

Figure 3. Reminder note in both English and Spanish to encourage continued interest and enthusiasm

PROGRAMA DE LECTURAS SUPER BUENO

¡RECORDATORIO!

¡Acuérdense de

leer su libro

2 ó 3 veces

cada día!

. . Pueden leer a solas o para alguien en su familia.

Figure 3. (continued)

difficult texts. In addition to the critical support of the audio models, the program provided other features important to reading success. The shared reading in school excited interest in the books and provided background information with a model of expressive reading. The books used in the home-school program were especially appropriate for independent reading because they contained short repetitive language patterns and pictures that facilitated comprehension. Not only did the program provide choice of books and tapes, it encouraged reading practice with repeated reading and provided the tape recorder for support.

Parents and teachers have strongly supported the home-school reading programs. They have noted not only increased reading fluency, but also child independence and confidence. The daily expectations and classroom routines for check in and check out establishes a home reading habit that often is not part of young children's lives. In addition, having auditory models of fluent English in the home environment encourages parent awareness of the student's reading progress and provides a way for parents who do not speak English to participate as a partner/learner in their child's home reading. Repeated reading with an auditory model provided critical support—scaffolding—which enabled these novices to feel like expert readers. This initial success provided confidence and strong motivation to practice, which is essential to developing skilled fluent reading.

With the dramatic increase of second-language learners in our nation's classrooms, there is a need to expand these children's language and literacy experiences. All students should have opportunities to feel successful and develop the confidence that will encourage them to become fluent, motivated readers. Because of the extraordinary demands placed on teachers in multicultural classrooms, special emphasis must be given to instructional activities that are effective with both second-language learners and native English-speaking children. Home-school instructional programs that provide books and audiotapes for home environments with limited exposure to the English language and English storybooks may be one of the solutions to these problems.

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APPENDIX

Selected Books Used in Home-School Reading Projects

TITLE	PUBLISHER	LEVEL*	# OF WORDS
Baby Gets Dressed	Wright	E	16
The Farm	Rigby	E	28
The Ghost	Wright	E	26
Go, Go, Go	Wright	E	17
A Party	Wright	E	14
What Are You?	Rigby	E	27
Who Likes Ice Cream?	Rigby	E	15
A Zoo	Rigby	E	28
All Of Me	Rigby	E	25
The Ball Game	Rigby	E	37
Buffy	Rigby	E	31
The Chocolate Cake	Wright	E	23
The Circus	Rigby	E	28
Don't Wake the Baby	Rigby	E	18
Frightened	Wright	E	42
Fruit Salad	Rigby	E	29
In the Mirror	Wright	E	23
Jack-in-the-box	Rigby	E	34
Major Jump	Wright	E	22
My Home—Cowley	Wright	E	46
Our Baby	Rigby	E	28
A Scrumptious Sundae	Rigby	E	32
The Tree House	Wright	E	32
A Toy Box	Rigby	E	33
What's for Lunch?	Wright	E	36
Who's Coming for a Ride	Rigby	E	2
Yuck Soup	Wright	E	25
Big and Little	Wright	E	36
Buzzing Flies	Wright	E	45
Dear Santa	Rigby	E	49
Dressing Up	Rigby	E	31
Getting Ready for the Ball	Rigby	E	27
I Love My Family	Wright	E	31
In My Bed	Rigby	E	57
Little Brother	Wright	E	31

*Level: E = Emergent, N = Novice, A = Apprentice, and D = Developing

APPENDIX

Selected Books Used in Home-School Reading Projects

TITLE	PUBLISHER	LEVEL*	# OF WORDS
A Monster Sandwich	Wright	E	36
My Home—Melser	Wright	E	42
Nighttime	Wright	E	44
Sharing	Rigby	E	24
Shoo!	Wright	E	37
Silly Old Possum	Wright	E	41
The Storm	Wright	E	29
Sunrise	Rigby	E	46
Teeny Tiny Tina	Rigby	E	34
Tommy's Tummy Ache	Rigby	E	20
Uncle Buncle's House	Wright	E	56
What Has Spots?	Rigby	E	29
When I Play	Rigby	E	31
Climbing	Rigby	E	34
Happy Birthday!	Rigby	E	28
Houses	Wright	E	59
In My Room	Rigby	E	44
Little Pig	Wright	E	53
The Monsters' Party	Wright	E	92
Our Street	Wright	E	40
The Pet Parade	Rigby	E	33
The Scarecrow	Rigby	E	31
Up in a Tree	Wright	E	47
Wake up, Mom!	Wright	E	94
The Bike Parade	Rigby	N	16
The Farm Concert	Wright	N	74
Hello Goodbye	Rigby	N	29
Horace	Wright	N	56
The Monkey Bridge	Wright	N	63
Our Dog Sam	Rigby	N	56
Reading is Everywhere	Wright	N	53
Surprise Cake	Rigby	N	32
We Make Music	Rigby	N	44
What Can Fly?	Rigby	N	28
Along Comes Jake	Wright	N	86

*Level: E = Emergent, N = Novice, A = Apprentice, and D = Developing

APPENDIX

Selected Books Used in Home-School Reading Projects

TITLE	PUBLISHER	LEVEL*	# OF WORDS
Bread	Wright	N	69
Goodbye, Lucy	Wright	N	60
Mr. Grump	Wright	N	77
One Cold, Wet Night	Wright	N	134
The Seed	Wright	N	51
Too Big for Me	Wright	N	70
Where Are You Going, Aja Rose?	Wright	N	100
Ants Love Picnics Too	Rigby	N	27
The Big Toe	Wright	N	123
The Boogly	Rigby	N	61
In a Dark, Dark Wood	Wright	N	81
Don't You Laugh at Me!	Wright	N	167
Grumpy Elephant	Wright	N	94
The Haunted House	Wright	N	78
The Present	Rigby	N	30
The Red Rose	Wright	N	127
Three Little Ducks	Wright	N	102
Timmy	Rigby	N	54
Two Little Dogs	Wright	N	72
The Well-fed Bear	Rigby	N	35
What Did Kim Catch?	Rigby	N	48
Where is Nancy?	Rigby	N	56
Baby's Birthday	Rigby	N	53
The Best Place	Rigby	N	61
The Farmer and the Skunk	Peguis	N	127
Five Little Monkeys Jumping	Clarion	N	100+
Go Back to Sleep	Rigby	N	74
Guess What!	Rigby	N	28
Let's Have a Swim	Wright	N	74
Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go	Atheneum	N	100+
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear	Peguis	N	100+
Who Will Be My Mother?	Wright	N	156
Dear Zoo	Four Winds	A	115
The Fat Pig	Peguis	A	100+
Grandpa Snored	Rigby	A	52

*Level: E = Emergent, N = Novice, A = Apprentice, and D = Developing

APPENDIX

Selected Books Used in Home-School Reading Projects

TITLE	PUBLISHER	LEVEL*	# OF WORDS
The Three Little Pigs	Gage	D	100+
The Tiny Woman's Coat	Wright	D	100+
Goodnight Moon	Harper Collins	D	100+
Help Me	Wright	D	100+
I Know an Old Lady	Wright	D	100+
I Was Walking Down the Road	Scholastic	D	100+
The Kick-a-lot Shoes	Wright	D	100+
Little Red Riding Hood	Ladybird	D	100+
You'll Soon Grow into Them, Titch	Greenwillow	D	100+
Are You My Mother?	Random House	D	100+
Go, Dog, Go!	Random House	D	100+
Green Eggs and Ham	Random House	D	100+
Hop on Pop	Random House	D	100+
I Can Read with My Eyes Shut!	Random House	D	100+

*Level: E = Emergent, N = Novice, A = Apprentice, and D = Developing

APPENDIX

Selected Books Used in Home-School Reading Projects

TITLE	PUBLISHER	LEVEL*	# OF WORDS
It's Not Fair	Rigby	A	51
Mike's New Bike	Troll	A	183
Pardon? Said the Giraff	Harper Collins	A	100+
When Dad Came Home	Rigby	A	46
When I Was Sick	Rigby	A	53
Come for a Swim!	Wright	A	100+
Dad's Headache	Wright	A	100+
The Gingerbread Boy	Steck-Vaughan	A	100+
Helping	Scholastic	A	100+
The Hungry Giant	Wright	A	100+
The Lion and the Mouse	Steck-Vaughan	A	100+
Meanies	Wright	A	100+
Rosie's Walk	Macmillan	A	100+
Susie Goes Shopping	Troll	A	100+
T-Shirts	Richard Owen	A	100+
The Wedding	Rigby	A	100+
When Lana Was Absent	Rigby	A	100+
The Cooking Pot	Wright	A	100+
Greedy Cat	Richard Owen	A	100+
Hansel and Gretel	Ladybird	A	100+
Happy Birthday	Troll	A	100+
I Saw A Dinosaur	Rigby	A	100+
My Boat	Wright	A	100+
The Carrot Seed	Harper Collins	A	100+
It Didn't Frighten Me	Scholastic	A	100+
Noise	Wright	A	100+
Obadiah	Wright	A	100+
One Monday Morning	Scribners	A	100+
One Sock, Two Socks	Gage	A	100+
Peanut Butter and Jelly	Dutton	A	100+
The Terrible Tiger	Wright	A	100+
Three Little Witches	Troll	A	100+
Elephant in Trouble	Troll	D	100+
Fun at Camp	Troll	D	100+
The Giant's Boy	Wright	D	100+

*Level: E = Emergent, N = Novice, A = Apprentice, and D = Developing

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